

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Reporting on the Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces Around the World

December 16, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. combat-equipped Armed Forces around the world. This supplemental report covers operations in support of the war on terror and in Kosovo.

THE WAR ON TERROR

Since September 24, 2001, I have reported, consistent with Public Law 107-40 and the War Powers Resolution, on the combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qaida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, which began on October 7, 2001, and the deployment of various combat-equipped and combat-support forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation in support of those operations and of other operations in our war on terror.

I will direct additional measures as necessary in the exercise of the right of the United States to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests. Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States.

United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to pursue al-Qaida terrorists and to eliminate support to al-Qaida. These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qaida's training capabilities. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, ended the Taliban regime and are actively pursuing and engaging remnant

al-Qaida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. The total number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is approximately 31,000, of which approximately 13,000 are assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council authorized ISAF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001, and has reaffirmed its authorization since that time, most recently for a 12-month period from October 13, 2008, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1833 of September 22, 2008. The mission of ISAF under NATO command is to assist the Government of Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment that allows for continued reconstruction and the exercise and extension of Afghan authority. Currently, more than 40 nations contribute to ISAF, including all 26 NATO Allies.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qaida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped and combat-support forces deployed to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the U.S. Southern Command area of operations since January 2002 continue to conduct secure detention operations for the enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay.

The U.N. Security Council authorized a Multinational Force (MNF) in Iraq under unified command in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 of October 16, 2003, and reaffirmed its authorization in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546 of June 8, 2004, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1637 of November 8, 2005, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1723 of November 28, 2006, and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1790 of December 18, 2007, set to expire on December 31, 2008. Under Resolutions 1546, 1637, 1723, and 1790, the mission of the MNF is to contribute to security and stability in Iraq. These contributions have included, but have not been limited to, assisting in building the capability of the Iraqi security forces, supporting the development of Iraq's political institutions, improving local governance, enhancing ministerial capacity, and providing critical humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to the Iraqis. The U.S. contribution to the MNF fluctuates over time depending on the conditions in theater as determined

by the commanders on the ground; the current U.S. contribution to the MNF is approximately 152,035 U.S. military personnel.

In furtherance of our efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, its friends and allies, and our forces abroad, the United States continues to work with friends and allies in areas around the globe. These efforts include the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped and combat-support forces to assist in enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of our friends and allies. United States combat-equipped and combat-support forces continue to be located in the Horn of Africa region.

In addition, the United States continues to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of all of the geographic combatant commanders. These maritime operations have the responsibility to stop the movement, arming, or financing of international terrorists.

NATO-LED KOSOVO FORCE (KFOR)

As noted in previous reports regarding U.S. contributions in support of peace-keeping efforts in Kosovo, the U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish KFOR in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999.

The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, to verify, and, when necessary, to enforce compliance with the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and Serbia (formerly the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities and, with local authorities and international police, contributes to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment that facilitates the work of the United Nations Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the European Union (EU)-led International Civilian Office, and the evolving EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX).

Currently, 25 NATO nations contribute to KFOR. Eight non-NATO countries also participate by providing military and other support personnel to KFOR. The U.S. contribution to KFOR is about 1,500 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 9 percent of

KFOR's total strength of approximately 15,500 personnel.

The U.S. participating forces in KFOR have been assigned to the eastern region of Kosovo but also have operated in other areas of the country based on mission requirements. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, helping to maintain a safe and secure environment remains the principal military task. The KFOR operates under NATO command and control and rules of engagement. The KFOR currently coordinates with and supports UNMIK within means and capabilities and has provided similar assurances of cooperation to EULEX. The KFOR provides a security presence in towns, villages, and the country-side; and organizes checkpoints and patrols in key areas to provide security, to protect all elements of the population living in Kosovo, and to help instill a feeling of confidence in all ethnic communities throughout Kosovo.

NATO continues periodically to conduct a formal review of KFOR's mission. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, force structure, force reductions, and the eventual withdrawal of KFOR. NATO adopted the Joint Operations Area plan to regionalize and rationalize its force structure in the Balkans.

The UNMIK international police and Kosovo Police Service (KPS) have primary responsibility for public safety and policing throughout Kosovo. The UNMIK international police and KPS also have assumed responsibility for guarding some patrimonial sites and operating border crossings. The KFOR supports these police forces when requested and augments security in particularly sensitive areas or in response to particular threats as events on the ground dictate.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Proclamation 8329—Wright Brothers Day, 2008

December 16, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our history is rich with pioneers and innovators who used their God-given talents to improve our Nation and the world. On Wright Brothers Day, we commemorate two brothers, Orville and Wilbur Wright, who took great risks and ushered in a new era of travel and discovery.

With intrepid spirits and a passion for innovation, Orville and Wilbur Wright became the first to experience the thrill of manned, powered flight. On December 17, 1903, Orville Wright flew for 12 seconds over the North Carolina sand dunes in the presence of only five people. In the span of one lifetime, our Nation has seen aviation progress from the first tentative takeoff at Kitty Hawk to an age of supersonic flight and space exploration.

On this Wright Brothers Day, we recognize all those who have taken great risks and contributed to our country's legacy of exploration and discovery. This year, we also celebrate the centennial of the world's first passenger flight. By remaining dedicated to extending the frontiers of knowledge, we can ensure that the United States will continue to lead the world in science, innovation, and technology, and build a better future for generations to come.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved December 17, 1963, as amended (77 Stat. 402; 36 U.S.C. 143), has designated December 17 of each year as "Wright Brothers Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation inviting the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America,

do hereby proclaim December 17, 2008, as Wright Brothers Day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 18, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 17, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on December 19.

Remarks at the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania

December 17, 2008

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Thank you for the warm welcome. I'm sorry I'm late. *[Laughter]* But I am honored to be back at the Army War College. A few weeks ago, you celebrated this college's 107th birthday. I was interested to learn that the school was originally located across the street from the White House. Apparently after a few years on Pennsylvania Avenue, it was time to pack up your bags. *[Laughter]* Laura and I know the feeling. *[Laughter]*

General Williams, thank you for your leadership. Sergeant Major Powell, thank you for greeting me.

I'm traveling today with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jim Peake. I assume he got a seat. *[Laughter]* Peake, how are you—finally, yes! *[Laughter]* He actually was a 1988 graduate of the U.S. Army War College. He claimed he was the president of the class. *[Laughter]* But he also modestly informed me that the reason why is because he was the oldest member of the class. *[Laughter]* Anyway, Mr. Secretary, thanks for your service.

Students, faculty, and staff, it's good to be with you.

Over the past century, this important institution has become one of our Nation's most revered places. It really has been. After all, the graduates of this college are legendary—